



FloorPrep

Legislative Digest

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

J.C. Watts, Jr.
Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

House Meets at 10:00 a.m. for Legislative Business

Anticipated Floor Action:

H.R. 975—Reducing Steel Imports and Establishing a Steel Import Notification and Monitoring Program

H.R. 820—Coast Guard Reauthorization Act



H.R. 975—Reducing Steel Imports and Establishing a Steel Import Notification and Monitoring Program

Floor Situation: The House will consider H.R. 975 as its first order of business today. Yesterday, the Rules Committee granted a closed rule that provides 90 minutes of general debate equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Ways & Means Committee. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. Finally, the bill provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Summary: H.R. 975 directs the administration—within 60 days of enactment—to limit steel imports into the United States from a foreign nation to its average monthly volume for the three-year period ending July 1997 (e.g., if Japan imported a monthly average of 100 tons between June 1994 and July 1997, it would be restricted to that amount under the bill). The administration may impose quotas, tariff surcharges, or negotiate enforceable voluntary export restraint agreements to ensure that this requirement is met.

The measure establishes a steel import monitoring and permits system to allow both government and industry to receive and analyze steel import data (i.e., on a “real time” basis) in a timelier manner. Steel importers must obtain import permits before exporting steel products from foreign countries. In addition, the Commerce Department must publish weekly reports on steel imports with the information (i.e., country of origin, destination, quantity and description of goods) obtained from license applications. The provisions of the bill expire after three years.

CBO estimates that enactment will reduce governmental receipts by \$43 million between FY 2000-2002. CBO also estimates that implementing the bill will increase discretionary spending by \$2 million in FY 2000 and by less than \$500,000 each year thereafter, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Finally, CBO estimates that the bill imposes new private-sector mandates on importers of nearly \$400 million in FY 2000, \$340 million in FY 2001, and \$150 million in FY 2002. The measure affects direct spending, so pay-as-you-go procedures apply. The bill was introduced by Mr. Visclosky *et al.*; the Ways & Means Committee ordered the bill reported unfavorably (i.e., disapproved, but still moved to the House floor) by voice vote on March 10, 1999.

Views: The Republican Leadership has not taken an official position on the measure. President Clinton opposes passage of the measure, and has threatened to veto it.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #7, March 12, 1999.



H.R. 820—Coast Guard Reauthorization Act

Floor Situation: The House will consider H.R. 820 after it completes consideration of H.R. 975. Yesterday, the Rules Committee granted an open rule that provides one hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Transportation Committee. The rule makes in order a committee amendment in the nature of a substitute as base text and accords priority in recognition to members who have their amendments pre-printed in the *Congressional Record*. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone votes and reduce the voting time on a postponed vote to five minutes, so long as it follows a regular 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Summary: H.R. 820 authorizes \$4.6 billion in FY 2000 and \$4.8 billion in FY 2001 for United States Coast Guard (USCG) activities and programs. The FY 2000 level includes the amount requested by the president, with an additional \$380 million for USCG drug interdiction activities (consistent with enactment of the 1998 Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act, which increased funding for USCG drug interdiction programs).

Finally, the measure includes a number of other provisions to (1) authorize an end-of-the-year strength level of 40,000 personnel for FY 2000 and 44,000 for FY 2001; (2) require foreign vessels to notify the Coast Guard 24 hours before they expect to enter U.S. waters (U.S. waters begins 12 miles from the coast; current law requires only a 24-hour notification before entering U.S. ports); (3) clarify that the Coast Guard may direct foreign vessels in U.S. waters during dangerous situations; (4) authorize \$99,000 to reimburse the owner of the former Coast Guard lighthouse facility at Cape May, New Jersey, for costs incurred for the cleanup of lead contaminated soil at the facility; and (5) require the Coast Guard to maintain search and rescue air facilities at Muskegon, Michigan, and in the area of Chicago, Illinois, until September 30, 2001.

Assuming appropriation of authorized amounts, CBO estimates that the Coast Guard will spend \$305 million more in FY 2000 than the FY 1999 appropriation. The bill was introduced by Mr. Shuster *et al.*; the Transportation Committee reported the measure by voice vote on March 11, 1999.

Views: The Republican leadership supports passage of the bill. An official Clinton Administration viewpoint was unavailable at press time.

Amendments: At press time, the *Legislative Digest* was aware of the following amendments to H.R. 820:

Mr. Gilchrest may offer a manager's amendment that makes several miscellaneous changes to the bill. Specific details of the amendment were not available at press time. **Staff Contact: Rebecca Dye, x6-3552**

Mr. LoBiondo may offer an amendment to allow the Coast Guard to purchase seven PC-170 coastal patrol vessels. The 1998 Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act (*P.L. 105-277*) authorized the Navy to transfer seven PC-170 vessels to the Coast Guard. However, the Navy later decided to keep the ships for its own use. These vessels will be used as part of the Coast Guard's "Steel Web" drug interdiction operation in the Caribbean. **Staff Contact: Craig Montesano, x5-6572**

Mr. Upton may offer an amendment to encourage the Coast Guard to continue its efforts to assist private organizations dedicated to lighthouse stewardship. In addition, the amendment requires the Coast Guard to promptly release information related to when property may be transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA) for excess disposal. The Coast Guard is in the process of designating certain lighthouses as "surplus" federal property and turning them over to the GSA for "disposal." The amendment is designed to facilitate lighthouse transfers to nonprofit organizations through the often-confusing federal disposal process. **Staff Contact: Jon Terry, x5-3761**

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #7, March 12, 1999.



PLEASE NOTE: UNDER AN OPEN RULE, MEMBERS MAY OFFER NEW AMENDMENTS TO A BILL AT ANY TIME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN PRE-PRINTED IN THE *CONGRESSIONAL RECORD*.

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